

# **esprit orchestra**

Alex Pauk music director & conductor

**1999-2000**

17<sup>th</sup> season



*esprit snapshot 2000*

Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts

Wednesday, May 31, 2000



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# esprit orchestra

Alex Pauk, music director & conductor

André Laplante, piano  
Barbara Hannigan, soprano  
Andrew Tees, baritone



Presented by: Borden Ladner Gervais LLP

*Vanishing Points* (1983)                    **John Rea** (Canada)

“Elegy” (1981)                                  **Harry Somers** (Canada)

*Concerto pour piano no. 2, Op. 64* (1999) **Jacques Hétu** (Canada)  
**(World Premiere)**

Jointly commissioned by the Esprit Orchestra and MusicCanada  
Musique 2000 with the generous support of Yamaha Canada

I *Andante – Allegro vivace*    II *Andante*    III *Allegro*

## Intermission

*Londonsong* (1997)                            **Ron Ford** (The Netherlands)  
**(North American Premiere)**

Ron Ford's presence this evening has been made possible by a generous gift from The Consulate General of the Netherlands

I	<i>Knightsbridge</i>	V	<i>Hammersmith</i>
II	<i>Peckham Rye</i>	VI	<i>Shepherd's Bush</i>
III	<i>King's Cross</i>	VII	<i>The Welsh Harp</i>
IV	<i>Cornhill</i>	VIII	<i>The Angel</i>

*Nine Proverbs* (2000)                            **Ana Sokolovic** (Canada)  
**(World Premiere)**                                  Commissioned by the Esprit Orchestra through the Canada Council for the Arts

I	<i>Falling between two stools into ashes</i>
II	<i>Drinking to excess constantly causing poverty, ruin and dishonour</i>
III	<i>Hanging a blue cloak on a husband</i>
IV	<i>Not bearing the sun to shine on water</i>
V	<i>Fishing behind the net</i>
VI	<i>Pissing on the moon</i>
VII	<i>Filling the well after the calf has drowned</i>
VIII	<i>Throwing roses before pigs</i>
IX	<i>Hanging your coat in the direction of the wind</i>

Following this evening's concert, please join us in the lobby for complimentary coffee to celebrate the launch of Esprit's latest CD, *Harry Somers \* Celebration*, on CBC Records.

programme

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Margery's dedication and hard work as an Esprit board member, over many years, reflected her steadfast belief in Esprit's goals and activities.

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Her spirit and warm presence are deeply missed.

# esprit orchestra

## Alex Pauk

music director & conductor

### Violin I

*Fujiko Imajishi, concertmaster  
Jayne Maddison  
Anne Armstrong  
Paul Zevenhuizen  
Ronald Mah  
Sonia Vizante-Busca*

### Violin II

*Dominique Laplante  
James Aylesworth  
Corey Gemmell  
Louise Pauls  
Maya Deforest  
Nicole Zarry*

### Viola

*Douglas Perry  
Valerie Kuinka  
Katharine Rapoport  
Angela Rudden*

### Cello

*Paul Widner  
Elaine Thompson  
Maurizio Baccante  
Marianne Pack*

### Bass

*Thomas Hazlitt  
Robert Speer*

### Flute

*Douglas Stewart  
Christine Little*

### Oboe

*Lesley Young  
Karen Rotenberg*

### Clarinet

*Max Christie  
Richard Thomson*

### Bassoon

*Gerald Robinson  
William Cannaway*

### French Horn

*Gary Pattison  
Miles Hearn*

### Trumpet

*Raymond Tizzard  
Stuart Laughton*

### Trombone

*Robert Ferguson  
David Archer*

### Percussion

*Blair Mackay  
Trevor Tureski*

### Piano

*Lydia Wong*

### Harp

*Erica Goodman*

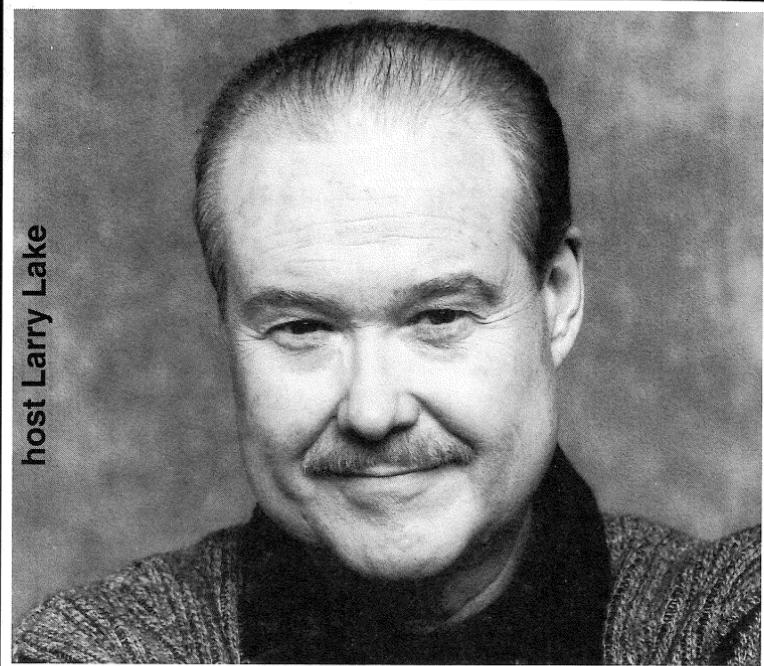
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# programme notes

John Rea

## *Vanishing Points* (1983)

Approximate duration: 15 minutes

*Vanishing Points* is the last panel of a musical triptych which includes *Homage à Vasarely* (1977) for orchestra and *Treppenmusik* (1982) for an ensemble of saxophones, clarinets, strings and variable speed tape delay system. The visual arts have been the source of inspiration for all three works.

*Hommage à Vasarely*, as its title suggests, attempts a musical evocation of the geometrical patterns found in the work of Victor Vasarely (1908-1997), whereas *Treppenmusik* ("staircase music") draws upon the loop-like designs and illusions of the Dutch graphic artist, M.C. Escher (1898-1972).

*Vanishing Points*, while not connected to any one artist's work in particular, nevertheless alludes to the "vanishing point(s)" often found in paintings. Quick moving melodies vanish and reappear in continuous accelerations, reminiscent of the perceptual effects in art created by the convergence of two or more lines, producing the impression of perspective. *Vanishing Points* was commissioned, thanks to a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts and the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, from the Esprit Orchestra. The work is dedicated to Esprit's Founding Music Director and Conductor, Alex Pauk.

Harry Somers

## "Elegy" (1981)

from *Elegy, Transformation, Jubilation*

Approximate duration: 4 minutes

The Esprit Orchestra's performance of this work last November marked the first in which the composer's instructions were followed with respect to placement of musicians and attention to detail in the complex multi-tempo, multi-layered and multi-phonic organization of the *Jubilation* movement. In effect, it was the work's posthumous world premiere.

Somers indicated that the *Elegy* can be performed as a separate piece on its own, and it is presented as such tonight.

Prior to the work's first performance, Godfrey Ridout wrote: "*Elegy* is in memory of various friends who have passed away. It is written for the strings, with the woodwinds affecting the colour at a few points. The general dynamic level is very low, with the exception of one build to intensity. An extended melodic line with simple chordal accompaniment makes up the musical materials.

"The conclusion of *Elegy* becomes the beginning of *Transformation*. Here, the musical materials are reduced to the most basic acoustical phenomenon—the fundamental vibrating sound and its overtones. Orchestral colours keep changing and shifting, at first very quietly, then, over a period of time, becoming more and more intense. The first presentation of a strong,

clearly defined rhythmic motive by four French horns in unison serves to introduce elements which will develop onto the *Jubilation* in which horns, trumpets, piano, winds and percussion do a major part of the celebrating. In *Jubilation*, the orchestra is split up into five different groups. The compositional technique is rather like that used for films and recording where many different tracks of music are recorded separately, in different colour and tempi, and then combined.”

*Elegy, Transformation, Jubilation* was commissioned by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in 1980 through a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts.

chords deliver a particular harmonic timbre. These chords are used along with ‘modal keys,’ often converging around the note ‘B,’ which becomes a kind of tonic for the work.

The opening *Andante* is an introduction containing seed material which is developed in the rest of the work. The piano presents a harmonic progression in crescendo, and at its summit the orchestra plays a short phrase which will become the essential melodic element. The same harmonic progression returns with orchestral counterpoints followed by the short melodic phrase played by the horn. After the piano establishes another important melodic cell, a short transition leads to the *Allegro vivace*, whose character and structure are similar to those of a scherzo (A-B-A). The ‘A’ section starts with a vigorous theme in ascending scales shared between piano and orchestra. A sweeter section follows, in which the oboe’s inversion of the theme alternates with the piano’s arabesques. After an increase in intensity, the first theme returns in *fugato*. Counterpoints intensify until the seed motif returns fortissimo, followed by a contrasting luminous episode in which the piano plays the first notes of this material. A dramatic transition leads to the ‘B’ section. The cadenza develops and breaks the preceding elements apart, and, by its end, the seed material has become a fully-fledged theme in the winds. When the ‘A’ section returns, its material is presented in reverse order and abbreviated: variations of the contrasting episode on a bed of muted brass, followed in force by the theme in scales. A last tutti leads to the coda

## Jacques Hétu *Concerto pour piano et orchestre no. 2, Op. 64* (1999)

Approximate duration: 20 minutes

The composer writes: “Dedicated to André Laplante, the Piano Concerto No. 2 was composed in 1999. It is written in a classic three movement form, featuring alternating slow and fast tempi. As a general rule, lyric and expressive passages contrast with more rhythmic and energetic sections.

The piece is further united by melodic and harmonic elements: a single cell generates the principal melodic material of all three movements, and persistently recurring

which ends the movement in a quick decrescendo.

After an introduction in the winds, the second movement begins with an expressive song shared by the violins and clarinets over piano arpeggios. All this is mere prologue to the piano emerging alone, quietly at first, becoming more and more penetrating with the arrival of a theme based on dotted rhythms. A new section, based on the introduction, alternates winds and piano progressively until once again the piano emerges, leading to a restatement of the violins' song.

Abruptly, the piano begins a succession of rising and falling fourths and fifths, sounding progressively more and more dense, to finally arrive at a restatement and development of the theme in dotted rhythms. The movement's climax is followed by a variation of the first theme on the same harmonic frame as the piano arpeggios, the whole approaching the character of an epilogue. The coda restates elements of the introduction in the winds, and ends with a last arpeggio in the piano.

A rather capricious *rondo* ends the concerto, in which the refrain is constantly being pushed off course by brusque changes of climate and tempo, now dance-like, now dreamy; oscillating between the 'giocoso' and the 'serioso'. The refrain, cut off by brief verses, is first heard three times. A slowdown leads to a passage marked *moderato* where two clarinets sing a nostalgic phrase on a harmonic framework based on a much-slowed refrain. This is dramatically interrupted by the piano, which breaks up this material, following which the orchestra progressively reinstalls the

initial tempo, and the *rondo* resumes its course. After several joyous flights of fancy, another slowdown leads to a new section marked *adagio*, in which the piano plays a small meditation based on the theme before proceeding to the coda. This begins with the harmonic progression of the introduction of the first movement, superposed with melodic elements of the second while the piano plays constantly building octaves. Having achieved the climax, a last suspension precedes the final drop."

The Piano Concert No. 2, Op. 64 was commissioned jointly by the Esprit Orchestra and MusicCanadaMusique 2000 with the generous sponsorship of Yamaha Canada.

Ron Ford  
*Londonsong* (1997)  
for Soprano, Baritone and  
Orchestra

Approximate duration: 16 minutes

Ron Ford has written: "*Londonsong* can be characterized as a collection of eight short – sometimes very short – songs that are joined into one continuous chain. The texts come from the collection *Nursery Rhymes of London Town* by Eleanor Farjeon from 1916 although these are not children's poems in the strict sense. In form, they exhibit the short phrases and images characteristic of children's poetry, but the texts themselves go beyond that of a simple children's poem. They describe playful and fantasy-like images of different locations in London.

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The quickly changing emotions and clear-cut formal structure of the texts made a setting for two singers necessary, wherein they sing together sometimes, others as a monologue, and sometimes together in dialogue. But *Londonsong* should be seen as more than just a set of songs, it is rather a chain of glimpses, wherein themes appear and vanish, only to reappear later under a different guise. The use of the orchestra is very diverse, sometimes vertically harmonic, sometimes no more than a shadow of the voice line, and sometimes almost percussive, all of which results in an undercurrent of image and meaning, an extra voice."

*Londonsong* was written with the financial support of the *Fonds voor de Scheppende Toonkunst*, at the request of Martijn Sanders and the *Concertgebouw BV*, for the *New Sinfonietta Amsterdam*, Dawn Upshaw and Thomas Hampson.

## Ana Sokolovic

### *Nine Proverbs* (2000)

Approximate duration: 15 minutes

"*Nine Proverbs* was inspired by the painting of the same name by Pieter Brueghel the Younger (1564-1647) which I saw a few years ago at the Art Gallery of Ontario" writes Ana Sokolovic. "I was at once seduced by the satirical and anecdotal aspects of this painting, as well as the simplified picturesque forms and literal presentation of the actual meaning of the proverbs.

"*Nine Proverbs* has nine *attacca* movements with nine contrasting atmospheres. We can, although, recognize similar elements: modes,

chords, rhythmical structures and colours, which will produce formal connections from one section to the other."

Brueghel's depictions of popular 16<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch sayings were adapted from a larger painting by the artist's famous father. Although not all of the proverbs have English equivalents, their wit remains fresh and pertinent, charged and disturbing.

The nine movements are: *Falling between two stools into ashes* (not being able to make up your mind); *Drinking to excess, causing poverty, ruin and dishonour*; *Hanging a blue cloak on a husband* (cheating on a husband); *Not bearing the sun to shine on water* (envy); *Fishing behind the net* (missing an opportunity); *Pissing on the moon* (attempting the impossible); *Filling the well after the calf has drowned* (locking the stable door after the horse has bolted); *Throwing roses before pigs* (casting pearls before swine); and *Hanging your coat in the direction of the wind* (making up your mind after others have decided).

Commissioned by the Esprit Orchestra through a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts, *Nine Proverbs* is dedicated to Esprit's Founding Music Director and Conductor, Alex Pauk .

# *Londonsong*

## **Knightsbridge**

Come up, come up to London Town! it's  
full of wonderful things!  
For instance, there's a Bridge that's used  
by nobody but Knights.  
With shining lance and also coat of mail  
they clank it up and down,  
And hold tournaments on Knightsbridge in  
the heart of London Town.

## **Peckham Rye**

"Who'll buy our Rye?  
Who'll buy? Who'll buy?  
The pretty girls of Peckham cry:  
"The ears are full as they can hold  
And heavy as a purse of gold.  
Sweeter corn you will not find  
For the London mills to grind  
Come buy, come buy  
Our Peckham Rye!"

## **King's Cross**

King's Cross!  
What shall we do?  
His Purple Robe  
Is rent in two!  
Out of his Crown  
He's torn the gems!  
He's thrown his Sceptre  
Into the Thames!  
The Court is shaking  
In its shoe –  
King's Cross!  
What shall we do? –  
*Leave him alone*  
*For a minute or two.*

## **Cornhill**

The seed of the corn, the rustling corn,  
The seed of the corn is sown;  
When the seed is sown on Corn-hill  
My love will ask for his own.  
  
The blade of the corn, the rustling corn  
The blade of the corn is shown;  
When the blade is shown on Corn-hill  
My love shall have his own.  
  
The ear of the corn, the rustling corn,  
The ear of the corn is grown;  
When the ear is grown on Corn-hill  
My love shall have his own.  
  
The sheaf of the corn, the rustling corn,  
The sheaf of the corn is mown;  
When the sheaf is mown on Corn-hill  
My love will leave his own.

## **Hammersmith**

Hammer, Smith! Hammer, Smith!  
What will you show my pony with!

I'll shoe it with a shoe of steel,  
Another of gold so red,  
A third shoe of ivory,  
And a fourth shoe of lead.

Then I'll pay you with a brass farthing  
I picked up out of the roadway,  
So hammer, Smith! Hammer, Smith!  
For I want to ride on the Broadway.

## **Shepherd's Bush**

O if you go to London Town you'll find a  
Shepherd there  
Who sits beneath a Hawthorn Bush and  
pipes a sylvan air;  
And little bleating kids and woolly lambkins  
crowd and push  
To dance and prance of a May Morning  
around the Shepherd's Bush.

## **The Welsh Harp**

O my harp, my tuneful harp,  
It sang so sweet and clearly!  
O my harp, my pretty harp,  
I loved my Welsh harp dearly.

My harp and I went a-wandering  
Went over Snowdon Mountain,  
From Anglesey to Swansea Bay  
It sang like any fountain.

Now was not I a silly lad  
To pine for London city?  
My harp fell silent on the road  
And would not sing a ditty.

By Collin Dale and Watling Street  
I went, my heart a-sinking,  
And now my harp lies in the Brent,  
It dropped while I was drinking.

O my harp, my tuneful harp,  
That sang on Wales so pretty!  
I sit and mourn my lost Welsh harp,  
What care I for the city?

## **The Angel**

The Angel flew down  
One morning down to town  
But didn't know where to rest,  
For they shut her out of East End  
And they shut her out of the West.

The Angel went on  
To Islington,  
And there the people were kinder.  
If you ever go to London Town  
That's where you'll find her.

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# biographies



## Alex Pauk, conductor

As a conductor and composer, Alex Pauk has been a leading exponent of new music in Canada since his graduation from the University of Toronto in 1971. After graduation, he participated in the Ontario Arts Council Conductor's Workshop for two years before continuing his studies in Europe and Japan.

In the early 1970s, Pauk settled in Vancouver where he was named Vancouver's Musician of the Year in 1975. While there, he helped establish the new music group *Days Months and Years to Come*, for which he was the Music Director and Conductor until 1979. Before moving to Vancouver, he had been instrumental in establishing *ArrayMusic* in Toronto and was its first conductor.

Pauk returned to Toronto again in 1980, founding the Esprit Orchestra three years later. Along with his careful attention to programming, Pauk's work involves a strong role in the development of Esprit's *Toward a Living Art* education and outreach programme.

Pauk was Co-chair for the 1984 ISCM World Music Days held in

Toronto and Montréal. In 1986, he was the Music Director and Conductor of the Satori Festival of New Music in Winnipeg, and most recently he was Music Director for R. Murray Schafer's *Princess of the Stars*, performed at Wildcat Lake in the Haliburton Forest and Wildlife Reserve.

As a composer, Pauk has written over thirty-five works and received commissions from the CBC, New Music Concerts, Vancouver New Music Society, Quebec Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, leading Indian dancer and choreographer Menaka Thakkar, harpist Erica Goodman, the Hannaford Street Silver Band and many others.

He has also composed for film, television, radio and music theatre. Pauk's most recent film scores, co-written with Alexina Louie, include the soundtracks for director Don McKellar's film *Last Night* and Jeremy Podeswa's *The Five Senses*. Recognizing in part nearly two decades of tireless efforts on behalf of new music, his native city recently named Alex Pauk Toronto's Musician of the Year.



## *André Laplante, piano*

Over the last decade, Canadian pianist André Laplante has firmly established himself as one of the great romantic virtuosos. He garnered international attention after winning prizes at the Geneva Competition and the Sydney International Piano Competition, then capturing the silver medal at the International Piano Competition in Moscow. Laplante has performed in major concert centers in Europe, North America and the Far East to the highest critical acclaim. Critics have compared him with Ashkenazy, Horowitz and Rudolph Serkin, placing him in the elite circle of virtuoso pianists who do not hesitate to take risks.

In recent years, Laplante has appeared as orchestral soloist with the Montréal and Chicago Symphony Orchestras, the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center, the Minnesota Orchestra conducted by Sir Neville Marriner, on tour in Europe with the Toronto Symphony under Andrew Davis, and with the Royal Philharmonic under the baton of Sir Yehudi Menuhin during their extensive North American tour.

Past seasons have also included a major concert tour of the People's Republic of China, recital tours of the Far East, Australia and North America, and appearances at major music festivals, including the Debussy Festival (France), Pecs Festival (Hungary), Orford Festival (Canada), Cascais Festival (Portugal), Salzburg Festival (Austria), International Summer Festival (Canada) and the Vermont Summer Festival (USA). André Laplante has served as a juror of the Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition, the International Music Festival in Australia, the CBC National Competition (Canada's most prestigious) and the William Kapell International Piano Competition.

This season, Mr. Laplante performed Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto in the opening season of the new Dewan Filharmonik Petronas in Malaysia.

An active recording artist, André Laplante's releases on the Analalekta label include works by Liszt (Félix 1995), Ravel and Rachmaninov, as well as an award winning Brahms album (Félix 1996). He has also recorded for CBC and Melodia.



## Barbara Hannigan, soprano

Barbara Hannigan studied at the University of with Prof. Mary Morrison, at the Banff Centre for the Arts and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, England. She graduated in 1996 from the Opera Studio at the Royal Conservatory of the Hague. Her study was supported by the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Glenn Gould Memorial Scholarship. She was a finalist in both the 1996's Hertogenbosch International Vocal Competition and the 1995 Royal Oratorio Singer's Competition (Holland).

Barbara Hannigan recently received acclaim for her creation of the role of Saskia de Vries (Vermeer's model and muse) in the Netherlands Opera's world premiere production of *Writing to Vermeer*, by Louis Andriessen and British filmmaker Peter Greenaway, which was performed in Amsterdam in December 1999 and most recently at Australia's Adelaide Festival. Directed by Peter Greenaway and Saskia Boddeke and conducted by Reinbert de Leeuw, the production will tour to New York's Lincoln Center Festival in July 2000.

Other operatic roles include Bastienne in Mozart's *Bastien und Bastienne* at the Cologne Philharmonie and throughout Germany with Celso

Antunes (Conductor) and the Bratislava Chamber Orchestra, Lucia in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* at the Le Festival de Radio France et de Montpellier, Amore in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Eurydice* with Opera Atelier in Toronto and Cleveland, the title role in *The Cunning Little Vixen* at the Royal Conservatory of the Hague, and Amore/Alinda in the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble's recent production of Cavalli's *Giasone*. She made her debut at the 1998 Salzburg Festival's production of *Aufsteig und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* by Kurt Weill.

Her performances of contemporary music include the world premiere of *de la nature de la gravite* by Georges Aperghis in Banff, Feldman's *Chorus and Orchestra 2* for soprano, double chorus and orchestra in Paris, Berlin, Freiburg and Köln with the Sudwestfunk Orchester conducted by Michael Gielen, and Berio's *Sinfonia* with Bramwell Tovey conducting the Winnipeg Symphony.

Future engagements include Bach's *B minor Mass* and *St. Matthew's Passion* with Collegium Musicum in Holland, Handel's *Gideon* with the Frankfurt Baroque Orchestra, Despina in *Cosi fan tutte* with the Edmonton Opera, and Ligeti's *tour de force* for soprano and chamber ensemble, *Mysteries of the Macabre*, in Germany and Holland with Reinbert de Leeuw conducting Amsterdam's Asko Ensemble.

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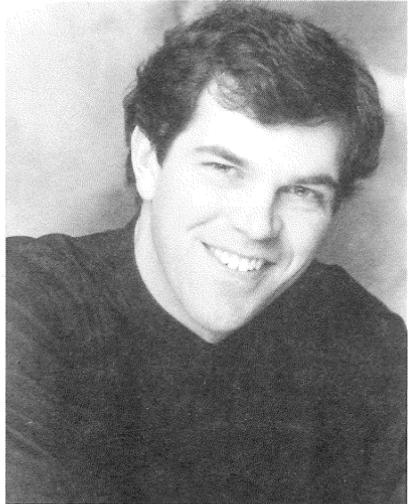
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**- CAP participant**



### *Andrew Tees, baritone*

Baritone Andrew Tees is an exciting new talent who is in his second season as a member of the Canadian Opera Company's Ensemble Studio. Heard as Hercules/Orestes in the Canadian Opera Company's *Giasone* last season, he was a featured soloist in the COC's '99 Altamira Festival, and this season starred as Tarquinius in the Ensemble production of Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*. On the mainstage, he was heard as the Marquis in *La Traviata* and also covered the roles of Marcello in *La Boheme*, Don Giovanni in *Don Giovanni* and Belcore in *The Elixir of Love*. As a concert artist, he appeared with Susan Haig and the Windsor Symphony in an evening of opera highlights.

The tall Opera McGill alumnus sang Escamillo for Toronto's Summer Opera Lyric Theatre and was chillingly convincing as King Conachar in Opera in Concert's revival of Healey Willan's *Deirdre*. He spent July of 1999 at Chataqua, and in the summer

months of 1998 was in Humbach, Germany where his roles were Monterone in *Rigoletto*, Sacristan in *Tosca* and Fiorello in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. He repeated *Fiorello* for the Canadian Opera Company during the 98/99 season and covered the role of *Figaro*. Three times a Canadian Champion rower, Tees has been seen on-screen as John Smithson in England's Film Four production of *True Blue*.

### *John Rea*

John Rea was born in Canada in 1944 and has led a triple career as a composer, teacher and concert producer. Recipient of many awards, he has been frequently commissioned and has written works in several genres: chamber music, music theatre, electro-acoustic music and compositions for large ensemble such as orchestra, ballet, choral and opera. He studied composition at the University of Toronto and Princeton University.

In 1979-80 John Rea lived in Berlin, and in 1984 he was composer-in-residence at Mannheim. His compositions have also been presented in a number of important events around the world such as the New Music America Festival in Philadelphia, L'Itinéraire and the Festival Musica in France, at the Holland Festival as well as at the ISCM festivals in Denmark, Canada and Sweden. *Time and Again*, for orchestra, was performed at the ISCM Festival in October 1994 in Stockholm and *Zefiro torna* was taken on a tour of Western Canada by the Esprit

Orchestra during the spring of 1998.

Besides his activities as a composer, John Rea has lectured and published articles on 20<sup>th</sup> Century music, and since 1973 has taught composition, music theory and history at McGill University, where he was Dean of the Faculty of Music (1986-1991). Rea was also a founding member of the Montreal new music society Les Événements de Neuf (1978-1989). He also serves on the editorial board for the new music journal, *Circuit*, and is on the artistic committee of the Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec.

Among his latest creative activities: the incidental music for the play *Urfaust-tragédie subjective* (after Goethe and Pessoa) for Théâtre UBU (1999); the septet *Plus que la plus que lente* for the Ex Novo Ensemble (1998); the sextet *Études multiples* for Ensemble Clavivent (1997); a re-orchestration for 21 musicians of Alban Berg's opera *Wozzeck* for the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne (1995); *Alma & Oskar (melodrama from beyond the grave)*, for voice and piano, written for the National Competition for Young Performers of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (1995); *Zefiro torna* for the Esprit Orchestra (1994); and the string quartet *Objets Perdus* for the Arditti Quartet (1992). This work earned him the Governor-General's prize in 1992, the second time he has won this prize.

*Vanishing Points* (1983) is the last panel of a musical triptych which includes *Hommage à Vasarely* (1977) for orchestra and *Treppenmusik* (1982) for an ensemble of saxophones, clarinets, strings and variable speed tape delay system. The visual arts have been the source of inspiration for all three works.

*Hommage à Vasarely*, as its title suggests, attempts a musical evocation of the geometrical patterns found in the work of Victor Vasarely (1908-1997), whereas *Treppenmusik* ("staircase music") draws upon the loop-like designs and illusions of the Dutch graphic artist, M.C. Escher (1898-1972).

*Vanishing Points*, while not connected to any one artist's work in particular, nevertheless alludes to the "vanishing point(s)" often found in paintings. Quick moving melodies vanish and reappear in continuous accelerations, reminiscent of the perceptual effects in art created by the convergence of two or more lines, producing the impression of perspective. *Vanishing Points* was commissioned thanks to a grant from the Canada Council and the National Youth Orchestra of Canada for the Esprit Orchestra. The work is dedicated to Esprit's founder-conductor, Alex Pauk.

## Harry Somers

(1925-1999)

Harry Somers was born in Toronto on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1925. In 1942, he began studying piano with Reginald Godden and theory and composition with John Weinzweig, with whom he worked through the 1940s. Moving to San Francisco in 1948, he studied piano with E. Robert Schmitz, a distinguished French performer and pedagogue and the dedicatee of his Third Piano Concerto. Somers' talent was recognized in 1949 by a \$2,000 Canadian Amateur Hockey Association scholarship for the study of composition abroad, and he went to

Paris for a year to become a pupil of the renowned composer, Darius Milhaud. During this sojourn, Somers completed four large compositions and began to work on his Symphony No. 1.

"It was a chance to study and write, and I needed every minute," said Somers, "Milhaud forced me to rethink and confirm my ideas, and this was good." Back in Toronto in the autumn of 1950, he continued working on his Symphony, which was completed the following year. In spite of his creative achievements, however, Somers' financial means were exhausted. To make a living he first got a job as a taxi-driver, and then, following an accident, drifted into music-copying. He managed finally to adjust his job requirements in such a way that he only worked part-time, using almost all of his time for composing.

Through 1960-61, Somers returned to France (by means of a Canada Council Senior Arts Fellowship) to become conversant with the latest developments in contemporary music in Paris, and to study Gregorian chant. During the 1960s he also became active in broadcasting and introducing Canadian music into schools. A grant from the Canadian Cultural Institute in Rome allowed Somers to live there from 1969-1971. Late in 1971, he returned to Canada via the Far East where he was deeply moved by various aspects of Eastern music and philosophy, much of which he had been exposed to as a youth by his mother, a theosophist and a student of comparative religion.

Somers' music has been performed in the USA, Central and South

America, Europe, the former Soviet Union and throughout Canada. He produced major scores for stage, concert hall, film, radio and television and employed voices, instruments and synthetic sounds in a wide variety of forms, both traditional and new.

Somers was made a Companion of the Order of Canada in 1972. On the occasion of the awarding of his honourary degree from the University of Toronto, John Beckwith said:

*[Somers'] music has been created...out of a mastery of the technical processes of his time, out of a wide intellectual curiosity, out of a sense of his relation to tradition; at a more essential level it has been created out of pain and isolation and (like all good music) out of love—in other words altogether out of an extraordinary feeling for the human condition....Through it all runs a remarkable elemental quality which...identifies the Somers style like a thumbprint....The music has spoken to us—and through us to the rest of the world—with an eloquence and force that few segments of our musical repertoire have matched."*

Harry Somers passed away late in the evening of March 9<sup>th</sup> of 1999, following a lengthy battle with cancer.

## Jacques Hétu

Jacques Hétu is one of the most performed Canadian composers, both within Canada and abroad. Between 1956 and 1961, he studied composition

with Clermont Pépin at the Montreal Conservatory. A grant from the Canada Council for the Arts and the *Prix d'Europe* allowed him to continue his studies in Paris with leading composers Olivier Messiaen and Henri Dutilleux.

Hétu's catalogue encompasses all genres, and includes: four symphonies, concertos for piano (1969, 1999), bassoon (1979), clarinet (1983), trumpet (1987), ondes Martenot (1990), flute (1991), guitar (1994), trombone (1995), marimba and vibraphone (1997) and horn (1998); works for voice and orchestra including *Les Abîmes du Rêve* (1982) and the *Missa pro trecentesimo anno* (1985, for the Bach tercentenary); an opera, *Le Prix*; as well as numerous chamber works.

In 1990, Pinchas Zukerman invited Jacques Hétu to tour with Ottawa's National Arts Centre Orchestra to Germany, Denmark and Great Britain. Zukerman had chosen two of his works: *Antinomie* and his *Third Symphony*. In November 1990, *Images de la Révolution* (1988), commissioned by the Montreal Symphony Orchestra for the bicentenary of the French Revolution, was performed by the New York Philharmonic under the direction of Charles Dutoit. In May of 1992, Kurt Mazur and the New York Philharmonic presented the U.S. premiere of Hétu's *Trumpet Concerto*, with Philip Smith as a soloist, and in November of 1995 Charles Dutoit and the Orchestre National de France gave the world premiere of his *Concerto for ondes Martenot* with Jean Laurendeau as a soloist.

The elements of Hétu's style can be defined as neo-classical forms and neo-romantic expression in a musical language of 20<sup>th</sup> Century techniques. In 1978 he wrote: "The point is not to seek an unimagined way of arranging sounds but rather to find one's own manner of thinking musically."

## Ron Ford

Ron Ford was born in 1959 in Kansas City. He studied composition, piano and computer science from 1978 until 1983 at the Duke University in North Carolina. In 1982 and 1983, he was the theory instructor at the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado. In 1983 he moved to The Netherlands where he finished his piano and composition studies at the Sweenlinck Conservatorium and the Royal Conservatory in the Hague. His teachers included Robert Heppener and Louis Andriessen. In 1984, he attended composition classes with Franco Donatoni at the Chigiana Academy in Sienna and in 1987 he received the Encouragement Prize for Composition from the city of Amsterdam for his work *Song and Dance* for soprano and chamber orchestra. In 1994, he was a composition fellow at the Tanglewood Festival in Massachusetts where he studied with Mario Davidovsky.

Ron Ford has written for widely varying ensembles. In 1988 he was composer in residence for the Percussion Group of the Hague, for whom he has written numerous pieces. He has also written numerous works for voice, most recently *Salome Fast* wherein he used narrated bible text in Arameic. He has also written for many dance and theatrical productions.

## Ana Sokolovic

Ana Sokolovic was born in Belgrade, Yugoslavia in 1968. She studied composition with Dusan Radic at the University of Nova Sat, and later with Zoran Eric at the University of Belgrade. She had recently received her Masters Degree from the University of Montreal under the direction of José Evangelista. Her repertoire consists of works for orchestra, piano and numerous pieces of chamber music. Several works have been performed in Canada, France, Yugoslavia, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Ukraine and Germany.

She has received commissions from the Esprit Orchestra, Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec, the dance company Brune, the Molinari String Quartet, the Orchestre baroque Montréal, the Ensemble Contemporain de Montréal and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra.

In 1995 and 1998, she was a prize-winner in the SOCAN Competition for Young Composers. In 1996, she represented Canada at UNESCO's International Rostrum of Composers, in Paris. In 1999, *Géométrie sentimentale* obtained the first prize in the chamber music category and the Grand Prix of the 13<sup>th</sup> CBC Radio National Competition for Young Composers.

Ana Sokolovic lives in Montreal and is an Associate Composer of the Canadian Music Centre.

## Esprit Orchestra

Canada's only orchestra devoted exclusively to new orchestral music, Esprit Orchestra was founded in 1983 by Music Director & Conductor Alex Pauk through the generous financial assistance of The Canada Council for the Arts and Suncor Inc.

Comprised of a core of forty-five dedicated musicians with the special skills needed to perform contemporary orchestral music, Esprit presents its annual subscription series of concerts in Toronto. The orchestra is devoted to developing a Canadian musical literature. To this end, it commissions and premieres new works each season, ensures the continued public access to these works through encore performances, radio broadcasts, compact disc and film recordings, and national and international tours. Esprit's concerts are regularly recorded and broadcast on CBC Radio One and Radio Two.

Only in its 17<sup>th</sup> season, Esprit has already commissioned 55 new works from 44 different composers, including such internationally-acclaimed Canadians as José Evangelista, John Rea, R. Murray Schafer and Harry Somers. Moreover, works commissioned by NEXUS, CBC Radio, the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (among others) have been premiered by Esprit.

Another facet of Esprit's mission is a commitment to setting new Canadian music within an international context. The orchestra has introduced Canadian audiences to major works by such contemporary masters as Takemitsu, Ligeti, Berio, Adams, Schnittke and Penderecki.

Maestro Pauk and the orchestra have also collaborated with leading soloists and ensembles including Jean Stilwell, Maureen Forrester, Rivka Golani, Desmond Hoebig, Richard Margison, Jon Kimura Parker, André Laplante, Robert Aitken and NEXUS.

In September of 1999, Esprit completed its triumphant debut European tour. With four concerts in Amsterdam at the invitation of the International Gaudeamus Music Week and another in Paris, the tour represented one of the largest-ever presentations of Canadian orchestral music in Europe. Over 90% of the repertoire was Canadian and compatriots Robert Aitken and Erica Goodman were the orchestra's chosen soloists. The previous year, Esprit also toured Western Canada, presenting concerts and educational activities to rave reviews.

The Esprit Orchestra's excellence and commitment to the future of our culture has not gone unnoticed: In 1990, SOCAN's Award of Merit, recognizing imaginative programming of contemporary music over several seasons was presented to the orchestra; in 1995, Esprit was awarded the Jean A. Chalmers National Music Award for outstanding contribution to musical creativity; the orchestra was awarded its first Lieutenant Governor's Award for the Arts for success in developing private sector and community support in 1996, its second in 1998; and, the same year, Esprit was one of twenty-three recipients of a special "million-dollar birthday gift" celebrating Joan Chalmers' seventieth birthday.

The orchestra expanded its activities in 1988 to include an education and audience development programme, *Toward a Living Art*, that has involved hundreds of students in workshops, rehearsals and concerts with Maestro Pauk, orchestra musicians, leading soloists and composers, and other professionals from the music industry.

November 1996 saw Esprit's *Toward a Living Art Festival*—a week-long open-house where students and the general public could meet composers from around Canada—feature open rehearsals, workshops, artists' talks, film screenings and concerts. The next year, Esprit initiated its *Student Audience Programme*, and provided 500 high school students with free tickets to its concerts.

The orchestra has also appeared in several Rhombus Media films, among them *Ravel; September Songs: The Music of Kurt Weill; The Eternal Earth*, about Canadian composer Alexina Louie; *Last Night*, the award-winning film by Don McKellar; and most recently Jeremy Podeswa's *The Five Senses*.

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